

Message Text

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51

ACTION IO-14

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SUBJECT: ECOSOC - COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, BUILDING AND PLANNING

1. SUMMARY. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND WORK PROGRAM WERE MAJOR ITEMS DEBATED DURING SECOND WEEK OF HBP SESSION. SLUMS AND SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS IN BOTH RURAL AND URBAN AREAS WERE FOCUS OF ATTENTION DURING R AND D DISCUSSIONS WHILE THE PROGRAM BUDGETING SYSTEM CREATED FIREWORKS DURING WORK PROGRAM DEBATE. USSR DELEGATION BELIEVING THAT COMMITTEE SHOULD STUDY OR SEEM SOME OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES THAT IT TALKS ABOUT SUGGESTED A STUDY TOUR OF NEW TOWNS IN GENEVA ENVIRONS. THIS WAS ARRANGED BY SECT. AND GOS.

2. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT WHICH THE COMMITTEE THOUGHT VALUABLE FOR LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT WAS THE CENTER'S JOINT PROJECT WITH UNICEF. WHILE THE CENTER'S DESCRIPTION OF ITS ROLE IN THE ACTIVITY WAS VAGUE, THE COMMITTEE'S RESPONSE WAS FAVORABLE BECAUSE IT APPEARED TO BE A CONCRETE PROJECT DEALING WITH CONCRETE ISSUES IN SLUMS AND SHANTY TOWNS.

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3. THERE WAS EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION ON SITES AND SERVICES PROJECTS. UGANDA, INDIA AND TRINIDAD/TOBAGO IN MAJOR INTERVENTIONS CITED SOME OF THE PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTING SUCH PROJECTS: 1) THE ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE IN SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS; 2) INSUFFICIENT GOVERNMENT RESOURCES AND ACTION; 3) THE LACK OF LAND TENURE; 4) THE LACK OF LOCAL RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN IMPROVEMENTS; 5) THE LACK OF ORGANIZATION ON ALL LEVELS AND 6) THE ATTITUDES OF THE PEOPLE IN SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS REGARDING SAVINGS. THE WORLD BANK REP CONCURRING WITH THE STATEMENTS MADE REGARDING SITES AND SERVICES NOTED THAT AN ADDITIONAL PROBLEM WAS THE ATTITUDE OF GOVERNMENTS WHICH LOOK AT SITE AND SERVICES PROJECTS AS PHYSICAL RATHER THAN AS SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

4. RURAL SETTLEMENTS. A MAJORITY OF THE DELEGATIONS SPOKE ABOUT THE LACK OF ATTENTION BEING PAID TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT. IT WAS THEIR CONCLUSION THAT INDUSTRIALIZATION WAS UNDESIRABLE WITHOUT EFFICIENT AND ORGANIZED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. THE CENTER WAS ENCOURAGED TO CONTINUE ITS RESEARCH IN THIS AREA WITH A FOCUS ON OBTAINING SOME BALANCE BETWEEN THE URBAN AND RURAL AREAS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

5. RENT CONTROL WAS DISCUSSED UNDER THE ITEM ON POLICIES, PROGRAMMING AND ADMINISTRATION. THE COMMITTEE, CONCERNED THAT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WOULD ENCOUNTER THE SAME PROBLEMS AS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IF RENT CONTROLS WERE EMPLOYED, SUGGESTED THAT THE CENTER RESEARCH ALTERNATIVE METHODS, I.E., RENT SUBSIDIES FOR FAMILIES WHO CANNOT AFFORD TO PAY RENT.

6. THE U.S. DEL PROVIDED THE COMMITTEE WITH INFORMATION ABOUT USAID ASSISTANCE IN THE FIELD OF BUILDING TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. DELEGATES AGREED WITH THE U.S. THAT THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION IN THIS FIELD SHOULD BE MORE EXTENSIVE BETWEEN BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL AGENCIES.

7. THROUGHOUT THE SESSION THE CENTER WAS CRITICIZED FOR THE POOR QUALITY OF ITS RESEARCH. ON ONE OCCASION THE IBRD REPRESENTATIVE, THE FRENCH AND U.K. DELS CITED GLARING ERRORS IN THE STUDY ON FUNDS EXPENDED ON INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS. CRITICISM WAS SO STRONG THAT A WORKING PARTY WAS CREATED TO DETERMINE HOW THE CENTER WAS TO PREPARE THIS KIND OF SURVEY
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IN FUTURE. THE WORKING PARTY RECOMMENDED THAT THE CENTER DISCONTINUE REPORTS ON BILATERAL AID. THE GROUP SUGGESTED THAT THE SECT. CONTINUE PRODUCING THE BIENNIAL DOCUMENT INDICATING THE LEVEL AND LOCATION OF UN EXPENDITURES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE HBP FIELD. THESE SURVEYS WILL NOT LONGER INCLUDE THE WORLD BANK'S ACTIVITIES IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS.

8. WORK PROGRAM--THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER IN PRESENTING

THE WORK PROGRAM NOTED A MAJOR CHANGE IN ALL FUTURE PROJECTS. HE FURTHER STATED THAT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS WILL BE INVOLVED IN THESE ACTIVITIES. HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT THE CENTER AND UNEP ARE CONSIDERING JOINT ACTIVITIES WHICH WERE RECOMMEND BY ESA.

9. THE U.S. AND UK NOTED THAT THE COMMITTEE COULD NOT RESPOND TO THW WORK PROGRAM BECAUSE IT LACKED SPECIFICS NOR, THEY SAID, COULD THE COMMITTEE MONITOR THE CENTER'S ACTIVITIES IN FUTURE ON A YEAR-TO-YEAR BASIS, WITHOUT CLEAR AND PRECISE INFORMATION. THE UK DEL, IN A STRONG STATEMENT POINTED OUT THAT WITH THE PROGRAM BUDGETING PROCEDURE THE COMMITTEE'S ROLE WAS DIMINISHED IF NOT DEMOLISHED. HE SAID THE COMMITTEE WAS LEFT WITH NO AUTHORITY TO MAKE DECISIONS REGARDING BUDGETS OR PROGRAMS UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM. THE INTENSE FEELING OF SEVERAL OF THE MEMBERS LED THE USSR TO TABLE A DRAFT RES. REQUESTING ECOSOC TO RECONSIDER THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROVISIONAL SYSTEM OF PROGRAM BUDGETING WHICH DESTROYS THE PROFESSIONAL VALUE OF THE COMMITTEE. THE RES. WAS ADOPTED.

10. STUDY TOUR.--THE USSR DEL NOTED THAT SWITZERLAND HAS IN RECENT YEARS CONSTRUCTED SEVERAL NEW TOWNS USING NEW TECHNOLOGIES. HE SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE COMMITTEE, WHICH IS CONCERNED WITH BUILDING MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTIONS TO VISIT SEVERAL OF THESE TOWNS. THIS WAS ARRANGED BY THE SECT. AND THE GOS. ONE AFTERNOON WAS DEVOTED TO THE TOUR. THE TOUR WAS SUCCESSFUL EVEN THOUGH TEMPERATURES WERE NEAR FREEZING.BASSIN

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